REMARKS

Summary of Office Action

Claims 71, 73-82, 84-89, 96 and 98-106 are pending.

Claims 71, 73-76, 78-82, 84-86, 88-89, 96, 98-101, and 103-106 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious from Petler U.S. Patent No. 6,081,519 (hereinafter, "Petler") in view of Bell U.S. Patent No. 6,229,818 (hereinafter, "Bell").

Claims 77, 87 and 102 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious from Petler in view of Bell further in view of Jain U.S. Patent No. 4,608,685 (hereinafter, "Jain").

Claims 71, 73-76, 78-82, 84-86, 88-89, 96, 98-101, and 103-106 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious from Bushmitch U.S. Patent No. 6,950,399 (hereinafter, "Bushmitch") in view of Bell.

Claims 77, 87 and 102 are have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious from Bushmitch in view of Bell further in view of Jain.

Summary of Reply to Office Action

Applicants have amended claims 71, 82 and 96 to more particularly point out and claim the invention. Applicants have amended claims 73-75, 78, 84, 85 and 103 to correct clerical errors in the claims.

Applicants have respectfully traversed the rejection of independent claims 71, 82 and 96 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious from Petler in view of Bell. Applicants have also traversed the rejection of independent claims 71, 82 and 96 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious from Bushmitch in view of Bell.

Summary of Personal Interview with Examiner

Applicants thank Supervisory Patent Examiner Daniel Ryman and Examiner Cassandra Decker for a personal interview on March 23, 2009, during which agreement was reached that the claims as amended distinguished over the Bell reference.

Reply to the Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 71, 82 and 96 have been rejected as obvious from Petler in view of Bell.

Applicants' invention relates to a home network. The home network includes a coax backbone and a plurality of network modules. One of the network modules is a network master module. Each of the network modules is connected to the coax backbone. The network modules are in direct communication with a demarcation point unit over the coax backbone. The demarcation point unit provides an interface between the home network and an external network. The demarcation point unit is separate from the master module.

The master module receives requests from the network modules sent over the coax backbone. The requests are for bandwidth to transmit bursts. The master module establishes an order of transmission opportunities for the network modules to follow when transmitting bursts to other network modules via the coax backbone. The transmission order is based at least in part on the received requests.

The master module may transmit an allocation burst over the coax backbone that allocates a transmission opportunity to each of the modules to transmit bursts to other network modules via the coax backbone. The transmission opportunity may depend at least in part on the amount of data ready for transmission in a selected transmission cycle. The allocation burst may be based on the transmission order.

Petler discusses a system wherein signals are sent from a first device in a home to a Fiber-to-the-Curb (FTTC) terminal which is outside the home. From the FTTC terminal, the signals are routed back to the home where they are received by a second device in the same home. See Petler, Abstract.

Bell discusses systems and methods for providing a local area network independent of a remote network. A master node is coupled between the local area network and a remote service provider to control data band communications between the local network and the remote network. See Bell, Summary of the Invention (col. 2 lines 8-9, 33-34) and FIG. 3 and corresponding Specification.

The Examiner has cited Petler to show "using the master module to receive requests sent over the coax backbone from network modules for bandwidth to transmit bursts." The Examiner has further cited Petler to show "establishing an order of transmission opportunities for the network modules to follow when transmitting bursts to other network modules via the coax backbone, said transmission order being based at least in part on said received requests." The Examiner has also cited Petler to show "using the master module to transmit an allocation burst over the coax backbone that allocates a transmission opportunity to each of the modules to transmit bursts to other network modules via the coax backbone, said transmission opportunity that depends at least in part on the amount of data ready for transmission in a selected transmission cycle, said allocation burst being based on said transmission opportunity." Office Action at p. 2-3 (internal citations omitted).

The Examiner has cited Bell to show "one of said modules being a network master module." The Examiner has further cited Bell to show "transmissions directly to other network modules via the backbone." Office Action at p. 3 (internal citations omitted).

Applicants respectfully disagree that Bell shows the claimed network master module. Applicants respectfully submit that claims 71, 82 and 96 are allowable at least because Bell does not show or suggest a network master module according to the invention.

Claim 71, as amended, states that the invention includes a home network having a plurality of network modules, one of the network modules being a network master module, each of the network modules being connected to a coax backbone, the network modules being in direct communication with a demarcation point unit (DPU), the network modules being coupled to the DPU via the coax backbone.

Claim 82, as amended, states that the invention includes a home network having a plurality of network modules, each of the network modules being connected to a coax backbone, the plurality of network modules being in direct communication with a DPU over the coax backbone via at least one splitter.

Claim 96, as amended, states that the invention includes a home network having a plurality of network modules, one of the network modules being a network master module, each of the network modules being connected to a coax backbone, two or more network modules being in direct communication with a demarcation point unit (DPU), the network modules being connected to the DPU via the coax backbone.

Claims 71, 82 and 96, as amended, further state that the DPU provides an interface between the home network and an external network, the DPU being separate from the master module.

Thus, the invention as claimed in claims 71, 82 and 96 includes a DPU, the DPU *being separate from the master module*. The DPU provides an interface between the home network and an external network. The invention as claimed in claims 71 and 96 also includes a plurality of network modules communicating *directly* with a DPU over a coax backbone, one of the network modules being a network master module.

Bell, on the other hand, discusses arranging "Customer Premises Equipment devices (referred to as nodes) to form a local area network (col. 5 lines 26-28)." "The nodes 102 and 104 represent a variety of customer premises equipment (CPE), including workstations, client computers, personal computers, servers, printers, and other network-connected devices (col. 4 lines 13-18)."

Bell also discusses a master node that "is coupled between the local network within the customer premise and the subscriber line to control data band communications between the local network and the remote service provider." See Bell, Abstract.

Thus, Bell's *master node* provides the interface between the local network and the subscriber line. According to the systems and methods of the invention the *DPU, which is separate from the master module,* provides the interface between the home network and an external network, *not* the master module. Additionally, Bell's nodes are *not* in direct communication with a DPU over a coax

backbone in contrast to the claimed network modules. Thus, Bell does not teach a master module according to the systems and methods of the invention.

Applicants respectfully submit that Bell does not teach the claimed network master module. Obviousness requires that all of the limitations of a claim be shown or suggested by the prior art. MPEP 2143.03. Accordingly, because Bell fails to show or suggest a portion of the claimed invention, the portion of the rejection in view of Bell is respectfully traversed. Examiners Decker and Ryman agreed that Bell does not show or suggest a master module according to the invention as set forth above in the Summary of the Personal Interview.

Thus, it has been shown for at least the foregoing reasons that the invention as claimed in independent claims 71, 82 and 96 is allowable.

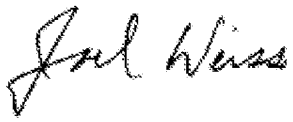
Claims 71, 82 and 96 have been further rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious from Bushmitch in view of Bell. Bushmitch is the primary reference. Bell is the secondary reference. The Examiner alleges that the secondary reference cures the primary reference. Bushmitch does not teach designating one of the modules to be the master module. Office Action, p.7. Bell has been cited to teach designating one of the modules to be the master module. Applicants respectfully submit that Bell does not teach the claimed master module because Bell's architecture requires that the master node provides an interface between each and every node and an external network, in contrast to the home network taught by the invention which includes a plurality of network modules communicating with a demarcation point unit independent of the master module.

Obviousness requires that all of the limitations of a claim be shown or suggested by the prior art. MPEP 2143.03. Accordingly, because Bell fails to show or suggest a portion of the claimed invention, Claims 71, 82 and 96 should therefore be allowable over Bushmitch in view of Bell.

Conclusion

In conclusion, each of the independent claims 71, 82, and 96, as amended, is not shown or suggested by the cited prior art. Because each of the independent claims are not shown or suggested by the prior art, each of the dependent claims, which depend directly therefrom, are allowable as well. Applicants respectfully request the allowance of claims 71, 73-82, 84-89, 96 and 98-106. Applicants respectfully anticipate a prompt and positive response.

Respectfully submitted,



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